

P. Uris, Leon
 Soc. 4.01.2 Topaz
 de Vosjoli, Philippe

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French break silence on spy

AT THE END of a week in which the French Government and the French Press both seemed in two minds whether to ignore Philippe Thyraud de Vosjoli or to smear him, the most influential newspaper in France came out yesterday with a whole page of careful analysis of the story which General de Gaulle's official spokesman had called, without reading it, "comic, utterly ridiculous and absurd."

French publishers, too, who had been cold-shouldering the novel "Topaz" by Leon Uris, which is based on de Vosjoli's story, have suddenly taken an interest in it. Three French publishing houses are now negotiating keenly for the rights.

Today, in the Weekly Review, we publish the results of INSIGHT'S independent examination of de Vosjoli's story. This shows that the background to his revelations can be found in 20 years of bitter and secret rivalry between the French and American intelligence services.

French official spokesmen remain silent about the whole affair. Le Monde remains sceptical about Vosjoli's story and about his motives. Its article is headed "Intelligence or publicity: the 'revelations' of T. de Vosjoli."

However, while earlier in the week the closest to an official reaction was the "leak" that de Vosjoli's rank was that of sergeant and that his "aristocratic name is doubtful," Le Monde comes up with information which seems to come from his official dossier.

It says that while before entering the secret service on contract he was a reserve sergeant-major, his rank is equivalent to that of a lieutenant. It concedes that his importance had become much greater than that rank would suggest by stating, accurately, that he was in Washington for 12 years with a "sumptuous" house and lavish expense account.

The Le Monde article spells out a further reason for the jealousy between the CIA and SDECE: Algeria.

It goes on to hint that de Vosjoli may have been associated, in the minds of his new Gaullist employers, with the O.A.S.

"They promised us a bomb. For the moment it seems all we have is a squib." That is Le Monde's summary of de Vosjoli's story, though it admits that "certain facts seem disquieting." But behind its stiff-lipped reaction, the French Government is deeply unhappy about the story.

On a recent visit to Paris, Charles Lucet, French Ambassador to Washington and a man who has done his utmost to improve relations, is said to have complained to a senior colleague: "They treat me as if I were a security risk."